



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 15, 2011

To the President of the United States, President of the Senate, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives

I am pleased to submit the *Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 2011 Performance and Accountability Report*. This report highlights our accomplishments in improving the timeliness, accessibility, and quality of health care and benefits service delivery that our Veterans have earned through their sacrifice and service to our country.

This past year VA has made progress in areas of significance for Veterans and the American people. On the path to ending Veteran homelessness by 2015, more than 26,000 homeless Veterans were provided with permanent housing through our voucher program. We processed more than 1 million disability claims for the second year in a row in a concerted effort to eliminate the claims processing backlog and increased the national accuracy rate for pension maintenance claims to 97 percent. While last year 99 percent of primary health care appointments were completed within 30 days of the patient's desired date, that goal has been pushed to just 14 days, and VA achieved that window 94 percent of the time. We continued to increase access to burial benefits through funding the establishment of four new State Veterans Cemeteries. VA also continued to make progress in improving its information security posture. This has resulted in a more comprehensive security program that better protects sensitive information. VA continued to excel in financial stewardship of VA resources as demonstrated by receiving our 13th consecutive unqualified (clean) audit opinion on our consolidated financial statements.

Our work continues on the key challenges facing the Department and our strategies to address them. We will continue to improve the quality of our programs and service delivery, optimize our efficiency, and exceed the expectations of Veterans, their families, and survivors.

We are focused on transforming VA into a 21st century organization that is people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking while fulfilling our Nation's enduring commitment to Veterans. We continue to implement our strategies so that Veterans receive the services and benefits they deserve. We hold ourselves to the same high standards of performance that the Nation and its Veterans do. The linkage between our goals, objectives, strategies, and programs has never been clearer, and our employees' performance is evaluated carefully on the basis of success against the Department's plans.

Every VA employee is charged to be an advocate for Veterans. We are all committed to providing Veterans and their families with the very best health care and services. The Nation has depended on our Veterans, and VA's employees want Veterans to know they can depend on us whenever, and wherever, they need the care and services VA provides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric K. Shinseki".

Eric K. Shinseki